

SALINA ARTS & HUMANITIES COMMISSION
September 20, 2006

The monthly meeting of the Salina Arts and Humanities Commission was held at the Smoky Hill Museum Community Room at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 20, 2006. In attendance were Shirley Braxton, Shawn Crawford, Peggy DeBey, Brett Halderman, Randall Hardy, Luci Larson, Gayle McMillen, Linda Moore, Cheri Parr, Linda Smith, John K. Vanier II, and Ted Zerger. Staff Present: Sharon Benson, Carrie Carpenter, John Highkin, Glenda Johnson, and Karla Prickett. Also in attendance: Carmen Wilson; League of Women Voters, April Middleton; Salina Journal, Jim Trower and JR Lidgett. Absent: Marilyn Benyshek and Rachel Loersch. Staff absent: Kathy Burlew and Brigid Hall.

Larson called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

Grant Award Presentation

Larson introduced Jim Trower of the Greater Salina Community Foundation. Trower is a Community Foundation board member. They have two grant sessions a year, and he was pleased to present SAHC with a check for \$2,500 in response to our grant request. Highkin explained that the request was for funds to do performances in underserved communities in Salina (for example for families in the Sunset and Cottonwood School areas) bringing performance to the west and north Salina. Trower presented the check and distributed Foundation brochures and newsletters. Highkin and Larson expressed appreciation to Trower and the Greater Salina Community Foundation.

Focus Time

Benson introduced guest speaker, J.R. Lidgett. Lidgett is employed as the Technical Director at the Salina Community Theatre. In spring 2006, Lidgett received a Horizons Artist Award of \$500.

Lidgett explained how he used the funds for a trip to Chicago to see productions and get exposure to other theatres. While in Chicago he saw the show *Wicked*. He said it was phenomenal...an amazing show with lighting that is unbelievable. He talked about how the show inspired him and his work for *The Wizard of Oz* (currently playing at SCT) and how he was able to implement ideas from his experience in Chicago.

Lidgett also saw the show, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. He thought the stage lighting was very strong, a very professional design for a show performed in a space much like SCT, employing similar equipment. During his visit he was able to observe what other designers were doing with the same tools that the community theatre has. Since he had some funds remaining, he was also able to see *Unmentionables*. Lidgett commented that the tech for this show was most interesting and performed at the highly acclaimed Steppenwolf Theatre Company. Overall the trip was an amazing experience – he loved the opportunity to go beyond Salina to see and experience high quality professional theatre.

The Salina Community Theatre also applied for a Sudden Opportunity Grant for Lidgett to participate in a Broadway Lighting Master Class in New York City at the NYU campus. Lidgett went to NY and participated in classes taught by top designers (e.g., Jennifer Tipton, Jules Fisher) in the country. He was able to meet and visit with Met staff at Lincoln Center. It was the best learning experience he'd had since college. When he came back to SCT, he completely scrapped his original lighting plan for *Cats* and reworked it using knowledge and ideas he obtained from the workshop.

Highkin - Horizons supported Lidgett learning and made an impact on the Salina Community Theatre and the community. Using new skills, he created a much different production. Larson - fabulous lighting at SCT – Lidgett does a great job...they are lucky to have him on staff.

Election, Introductions & Welcome New Commissioners

Larson passed the figurative gavel to Smith and noted it was great to serve as Chair this past year. Larson felt it took until her second term to figure out the complexity of all the different entities that SAHC encompasses and she is still learning. It's great to have Smith come back again as Chair. Larson is excited to remain on the commission and hopes all enjoy their time as much as she has.

Smith is happy to serve as Chair and noted the commission has other very capable officers: Linda Moore, Cheri Parr and Peggy DeBey, who will work on the Executive Committee with Larson and Highkin. Smith then introduced the new commissioners: Brett Halderman, who actually started this summer as our student liaison and attends South High. Shirley Braxton is finishing Paula Wright's remaining one-year term. John Vanier is the City Commission representative- we welcome him and appreciate his attendance. Gayle McMillen is a new SAHC commissioner whom everyone probably knows and we thank him for agreeing to serve. Shawn Crawford works for Blue Beacon Charities and brings expertise in grant writing and other areas. Smith thanked all these new additions for their willingness to serve.

Smith noted that a couple commissioners who are teachers are absent due to parent/teacher conferences – Rachel Loersch and Marilyn Benyshek.

Minutes

Parr motioned to approve the minutes of July 19, 2006 and Hardy seconded.

Committee Assignments

Smith - Highkin and staff have noted the need to work committees back into the Commission. Not asking anyone to sign up for one of the four committees yet, but will be asking peoples' choices by the next meeting. The four committees are Horizons, Finance, Community Art & Design, and Planning/Community Awareness. We need three commission members per committee and hope to have 2 or 3 outside community members on each. Call or email Highkin or Smith when you have selected your choice(s). These smaller committees are good for structure and helpful in getting things done. Smith asked for questions. Hardy - what are the parameters of the different

committees? Smith held up the initial letter outlining the committees. Highkin - these smaller committees are an effective board tool – work can be done in committees and reported in main meeting.

Staff Reports

Smith noted the extensive report on what staff does - amazing to see the accomplishments of the office. No questions or comments. Smith thanked the staff for all its hard work.

Horizons

Benson informed the commission that five artists applied for the \$500 Horizons Artist Award, with a wide variety of projects. The requests were evaluated by Lorne Render – Director of the Beech Museum of Art at K-State. Render has a wide base of knowledge in visual and arts administration – he was able to look at budgets and make informed judgments on artistic merit and thoroughness of the requests. His task was to give recommendations on each grant regarding funding – he recommended approval of the full slate of applicants, \$2,500 total appropriation of funds.

Zerger inquired if it was conceivable that we could have funds for 5 applicants and have 5 requests, and yet 1 might not be recommended. At that point we may need to make a decision. Highkin stated in this case, Render looked at everything closely and evaluated the requests. Smith - as these awards get more widely known we might have more requests than amount available to be dispersed. Benson – in this case the evaluator had no problem with all five. Zerger - in situation like this, it might be of interest to see entire application. Benson - this simplified application process is patterned on Kansas Arts Commission where a panel signs off on a peer panel recommendation; this is different from the Developing Artist Grant process – we're not asking Commission to make judgments but to act on Render's recommendations. Benson held up the actual application form and explained that it consists of only 300 words describing the request and a budget page which was compiled and enclosed with the Commissioners packets. Actual Horizons Grants with higher funding require a different and more extensive application and evaluation. Artist Awards are meant to be very simple and an introduction to larger grant requesting. One question raised – are the artists who receive funding required to send in some form of final report? Benson - yes, the final reports for the spring award will be enclosed in the next packet – for this small investment, we get a lot of activity. Smith - exciting artists and results.

Larson motioned to accept the evaluator's recommendation of fully funding all five requests and Moore seconded. Motion carried.

Final Report

KWU Horizons final report was reviewed. Smith - able to give dollars for production company – multi camera video production which has been seen on TV. KWU is now in second year of funding.

Smith - tomorrow is the Horizons Gathering at Mariamante at Marymount Chapel at 7:00 p.m. Highkin - this will be a small event for appreciation of the Horizons donors, a means for Horizons members to meet one another, to gather and have close contact with

artists. Donnie Marrs has rented us the Chapel, an unusual and beautiful location. It will be catered – desserts and beverages provided with the concert performed by Acoustic Eidolon. We could use help with guiding people into parking lots, and would like some commissioners to stand out front to greet and welcome along with Highkin. Acoustic Eidolon will also be playing at Art ala Carte and school residencies on Friday. A larger event will take place later in the fall to recruit people to join Horizons.

The Developing Artists Grant Review will be from 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. on Tuesday, November 7. Highkin - it's important to make sure we allow enough time to give all applications fair evaluation, discussion, and time to figure out how to divide available funding. Smith - it's an important process and takes some time to do it right. McMillen: would be teaching that day, but will make arrangements to have his class covered. Smith - everyone be here by 10 minutes till 4 pm so that everyone is seated and ready to begin on time. Benson - we have some really interesting grants and great evaluators. Smith - packets will be mailed to you around the 20th of October so that you have time to read and process them prior to the review session.

Planning Update

Highkin – reminded everyone about the preliminary work that was done in spring...we brought in consultant Diane Mataraza. She separately met with staff and commissioners and those involved in previous planning – Martha Rhea and Ellen Morgan. She examined the previous planning history and how it moved forward. There's been no strategic plan completed since 1992, a comprehensive cultural plan – it provided a strategy for SAHC and also outlined needs and expectations for other cultural organizations. Currently, we need to come up with detailed community cultural assessment to evaluate current services and look at what's needed; we shall work closely with cultural organizations, talking with other directors on how to share materials and the process with them in a useful way. We'll talk to stake holders, to educators and social service providers, and work hard to reach individual community members who may not currently be arts users or may not know the ways that SAHC already affects their lives. Make attempt to touch broad range of people. We hope to come out with 1) detailed information useful to all in cultural communities and 2) a specific plan for our own department – implementable goals and objectives, timeline, an assessment of where we are and need to be; we'll re-examine on an annual basis. It may be a 3-year plan outlining what to aim for and see how far beyond that timeline it can go. Our consultant suggests that this will take about 10 -12 months. Not a simple process, but we need to get under the skin of Salina society – it will pay dividends in awareness and we'll be able to listen to and serve a lot of people. Parr - this will be a plan with specific, measurable results. Highkin – it's always helpful for us to provide service to organizations that are part of the cultural world in Salina.

Highkin - we have to complete a RFQ or a RFP for the consultant. Highkin has developed a RFP and City Manager Gage has reviewed it. Gage suggested doing a RFQ because it gives greater leeway in timeline and in negotiating to select. We will have these out in early October and ask for them to be returned in a month. We will be mailing to 25-30 people and narrow the finalists to 2-3 to be interviewed. We will need

to develop a Steering Committee (arising from the Planning/Community Awareness Committee). This committee will recommend which consultant to hire. Timeline: November develop a short list and mid-December chose who to hire. The budget is \$30,000 - \$50,000 with the Foundation's \$25,000 that was approved by mail and \$25,000 from the City. There are some funds available from the State.

Parr - will the Economic Impact Survey merge with the planning study? Highkin - we are participating with Americans for the Arts in a national survey and we are getting surveys of at least 50 audience members attending a specific event. We're gathering the last of the organizational surveys of 15 Salina organizations. The results are due to AMA September 22nd. Have all but 2 or 3 from other organizations. The will be a useful tool for the new consultant. Ultimately, it will provide hard information on the value of arts & culture in Salina and provide as an economic entity. Smith - this undertaking is very important and we need to have a strategic plan for next few years – more information to come.

Museum Update

Highkin gave an update on what's going to happen on Santa Fe Day, September 23rd. The parade will be on Santa Fe all the way to Masonic Temple. The Blades will play at Campbell Plaza after the parade passes by. From noon on, activities will be taking place between 7th & 9th streets on Iron and just above 8th and Iron to Museum parking lot. There will be an historic car show. We have made electrical upgrades to our building to have food vendors on 8th & Iron. Also on 8th & Iron will be demonstrations; a printing press, log cabin, 20's dance lessons in the Museum lobby, music, bead making for flapper accessories all tying in with 20's Exhibit; and of course the inflatables for kids. There are a couple bands from schools to augment professional bands. It's a most important date for Museum attendance.

Director, Susan Hawksworth and baby have visited and checked out the new furniture in the lobby. She'll return October 20th. There are two open staff positions – the Education Coordinator and the Curator of Exhibits. Highkin has been working with Hawksworth to get the positions filled and get back to having a full staff. Smith encouraged everyone to try to attend Santa Fe Day and passed on her appreciation of the Museum staff – they are holding up well with all the transitions and short-staffing.

Other Business

Attention was brought to the Art a la Carte, Connections Collection, the Cultural Calendar and the Board Orientation handouts on the table. Highkin announced the Gran Folklorico de Mexico at the Stiefel will be on October. 24th. Larson commented on how great one side of the flyer is in Spanish.

Highkin reminded the new Commissioners about the orientation September 28th at 4 p.m. Anyone may attend – it will be in the SW conference room and last about 1 hour.

Meeting adjourned 5:25 p.m.

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